- Lessons from the Field -

Strategies for Student Support Teams to Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic Well-Being and Success

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Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Good afternoon again. Welcome to today's webinar, the Strategies for Student Support Teams to Support Students' Social, Emotional, and Behavioral and Academic Well-Being and Success. We're excited to have you in this webinar today, and we are pleased also to have a great lineup of speakers to share their thoughts and ideas with you. This is the fifth and last webinar in our series on supporting students', social, emotional, and behavioral and academic wellbeing, and on behalf of the US Department of Education, we're pleased to have you with us today. And in fact, nearly 2000 people have registered for this webinar, so we're sure to have more folks log in as we move on. This webinar is part of our Lessons from the Field webinar series, and this series highlights the effective tools, the techniques, and the strategies that are employed by you, our practitioners in the field to address the hot topics that are on top of your minds as you work with our students.

You can access the recorded webinars from the series on the webinar page that is now being shared in chat. This webinar will begin with an overview of the tip sheet that this was based on, which is entitled Strategies for Students and Teacher Support Teams to Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Well-Being and Success that has been linked in the chat for you now. Once we finish with the context setting, we'll move into a panel discussion with our panelists who are come from three separate communities and who are excited to share the strategies that they use to support students in their schools, and we're certain that you'll find some strategies that you might use as well. As always, if you have additional strategies that are working for you, please reach out to the best practices clearinghouse at ed.gov to share those strategies. As we know our work is better and stronger when we work together and we can share strategies to support our students.

Please note that the content of the presentation does not necessarily represent the policies or views of the United States Department of Education, nor does it imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. My name is Cindy Carraway-Wilson, and I'm a training specialist for the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments for NCSSLE. NCSSLE is funded by the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. To learn a little bit more about NCSSLE, we encourage you to visit our website. On our website, you can access a wide range of resources that address climate change and conditions for learning. To give you a sense of what that website looks like, on the right is a snapshot of our most recent face page and on the left are some resources that people use frequently to help adjust their school climates and make conditions of learning stronger for their students.

Please note that this webinar is being recorded and all materials that you see today, including the slides, any listed resources and the speaker bios as well as the recorded version of this webinar will be available within the event webpage within this website. And in fact, some items are already there, such as the slides and the speaker bios. Please also note that you have access to previous Lessons from the Field series sessions, including the other four webinars from the series by visiting that webinar series webpage, which is also listed in chat. I'd like to briefly go over the logistics and the agenda for today so that we all can be prepared for what's coming ahead. In just a moment, we'll be getting a welcome from the Department of Education, and from there we'll move into a brief context setting presentation. After that, we're going to spend significant amount of time in a practitioner panel where we can hear those strategies.

We have a dynamic panelist on our panel today with practitioners coming from Pasco, Florida, Memphis, Shelby, Tennessee, and Gardner, Massachusetts School Districts, and we're so excited for the strategies that they will be sharing with you. At the end, we'll close the content delivery, but please do stick around. The last 15 minutes of this event, we will be responding to questions from you, our audience. So please do remember to use that Q&A button in your Zoom control panel to post your questions. Now it's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Bryan Williams, director of at the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools and the office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education, Mr. Williams.

Bryan Williams: Thanks so much, Cindy, and good afternoon everyone. I'm pleased to welcome you to our latest Lessons from the Field webinar Strategies for Student Support Teams to Support Students' Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Academic Wellbeing and Success. As Cindy mentioned, this is the fifth and final webinar in this miniseries that offers information and best practices to support and respond to students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs, including practices designed to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline in schools. It's important to identify shifts in school climate and changes to classroom environments that are necessary for educators to be more successful in addressing student needs. Student support teams also called multidisciplinary teams, play a critical role in identifying necessary changes in learning

environments as well as additional academic and behavioral supports individual students may need to promote wellbeing and achievement. This miniseries is based on a set of five resources released by the U.S. Department of Education in the late spring focused on supporting students', social, emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing and success.

During the first four webinars, we explored guiding principles as well as strategies for school districts, leaders, families, educators, and school staff to support these critical needs. Today's session is based on a fact sheet with strategies used by student support teams to promote student social, emotional, behavioral, academic wellbeing, and success. Student support teams are school staff members who are well-trained to identify and help students needing additional academic and behavioral support. Highly effective student support teams include educators, counselors, social workers, administrators, and others who provide guidance on universal prevention and school-wide supports or tier one supports for all students. They also provide more individualized supports or tier two or tier three supports to meet the unique needs of students and leverage their strengths to ensure all students have opportunities to be successful in school. When students are well-supported, disciplinary actions may be avoided or reduced, resulting in students staying in school, maintaining connections with school-based adults and peers, and continuing to learn in advance academically.

This webinar will provide context setting information and panel discussion with practitioners from Memphis, Shelby County schools in Tennessee, Pasco County School District in Florida, and Gardner Public Schools in Massachusetts. Our panelists will share practical strategies for developing and implementing positive student supports. Throughout this miniseries, we hope that you'll learn key strategies you can implement in your schools. Strongly encourage you or a member of your team to view each of these webinars, not to mention the guiding principles and fact sheets, and share what you have learned broadly in your schools, and together we can continue to support positive learning environments for all students. So thanks again for joining us today, and I'm going to turn it back over to Cindy.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you so much Mr. Williams for your welcoming comments. We appreciate your ongoing support for this webinar series and for these important fact sheets. Now it's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Rob Mayo. Dr. Mayo is a senior technical assistant consultant at the American Institute for Research. Dr. Mayo.

Rob Mayo: Thank you, Cindy, and welcome everyone again, and happy Wednesday. As we begin to set the context for today's wonderful panel discussion, we would like for you to think about where your district and your school currently are and what you might focus on or improve upon in order to get where you need to go. What are you curious about in reference to the who's, what, when, where's why's and how's of these efforts and related lessons learned? So to begin setting the context, we're going to walk through particular nuances as considerations related to the strategies laid out and the resources our focus of today, particularly ensuring the ideal team membership and makeup. As Bryan

just mentioned, it's important to have administrators, teachers, student support professionals, school-based mental health and behavioral specialists and the like. And one might also pay particular attention to including special education teachers as a matter of practice, whether or not the student has an IEP or not, because they bring a special lens and expertise to this work.

And relatedly fully utilizing school-based mental health professionals and school nurses expertise and really guarding against them being assigned to other duties as assigned rather, because they aren't classroom-based. I know it's a particular struggle and if you're a resource strap, but we want to really, really make sure that these folks that have specific training and expertise, particularly in the areas we're focusing on today, are fully utilized and the expertise tapped into. And the same could be said based on recent federal efforts to fully utilizing and appropriately utilizing and tapping into the emergent expertise of your school-based mental health interns who are at site-based practicum and internship steps and under clinical supervision. And this is a great opportunity and a win-win win for both our emerging professionals and the children and families and communities that we serve. Understanding that a lot of this work happens, miss competing priorities, alignment with and or integrating these efforts into the work of other teams.

It's very, very important because these efforts ultimately require many of the same professionals who have direct services to provide. So as much as we can align and integrate this work into other teams and vice versa, the better. And of course, the imperative of really communicating and authentically collaborating with families and students in the way of students co-constructing with their families and caregivers and owning their success pathways versus schools administering programs and supports to them. And in doing this from the very beginning. And one of the few silver linings from the last couple of years has been taking advantage of technology to involve parents in a way of minimally being burdensome to them. So we all know now that there are virtual options to allow parents if properly scheduled, a proper heads up given to participate in student support team meetings and other meetings without having to take off work.

So that's one of the few silver linings, but one of the ones that I wanted to make sure we kept top of mind today. And of course, the ongoing challenge of providing the time, training, and bandwidth necessary to do this work well and with fidelity. So some of the things you might want to listen to as far as the teaming beyond membership and composition is what are the ebb and flow of the meetings in their schedules and what agenda drives these meetings and how is time made for classroom teacher participation and the like. So those are some of the nitty-gritty, very much so in the weeds. But those are some of the things that I'd like to pull out of today's call to give some strategies and perhaps some innovative ways that our panelists have achieved these goals.

The strategy number two, identifying students who need additional support. Of course, we talked about developing an early warning system or the like and related students' academic and social progress data points with clear cut data

points, of course and thresholds to drive data-driven decision-making protocols to get away from a more anecdotal type decision-making systems where folks are making decisions in the moment that are not necessarily informed by data and mitigating potential subjectivity and potential bias. So that's very, very important of course. And it's common upon districts and also school level leaderships to provide the periodic user-friendly data report formats and ideally well in advance of the meetings so your team members aren't consuming the information and getting into the problem solving and decision-making with parents and students in real time. So timely, as in upfront data reports are ideal for sure.

Strategy number three is implementing tier two targeted and tier three intensive supports. The ongoing importance of vetting and selecting evidence-based programs and promising practices that have shown promise to be effective with your population served and building individual collective capacity for folks to implement it with fidelity and giving programs the time to work. All too often, we want quick fixes as we call them, right? And silver bullets and the like. And we know that this work takes time. It takes time for our kiddos to consume and apply new skill sets, mindsets and behaviors and the like.

So I can't overstate giving these things time to work and dedicating the district a site level resources for capacity building and coaching supports. And these resources we're talking about are of course, fiscal human resources, material and time. So I know for sure that at least one of our talents today took the time to strategically roll out certain initiatives or components of their work and spaced out the PD in a way that folks can again take in and apply their information and practice and learn from their experiences versus the water hose effect. All too often, because we're urgent and passionate professionals, we all too often try to get it too much at once.

And so how we can strategically roll things out over time in face of the immediacy are considerations that definitely we should be curious about hearing about today. And also building our greater collective capacity through partnerships with community-based organizations. So it'll be a sweet thing when we get to the point where we have more resources and non-classroom based resources and supports than we need, but we're not there yet. And so tapping into community-based organizations to provide social, emotional, behavioral, mental health support, more comprehensive social work support and connecting families and students to resources, and that way the more, the merrier. And this of course calls for strong communication, collaboration, and coordination because even if well intended, we can for instance over evaluate, right, duplicative in service delivery, so I have gaps in service delivery and really in some cases even re-traumatize family and students by them having to tell their stories again and folks asking the same questions.

So of course that gets into MOUs, MOAs and the like and data sharing agreements. But again, I think most of us could benefit from as much community-based support as possible. And last but not least, required to this periodic fidelity monitoring and continuous quality improvement adjustments.

So mid-course adjustments, right? You'll know early on if you're very much so in tune with your data that something's not being as effective even with giving it time or it's not having the desired even interim results or formative results that you're looking for. So you have to be mindful of your data, know your students, know your education professional peers, and be willing to make informed continuous quality improvement or make course adjustments and for some system level considerations. Okay, these things that you want to have an ear out for as we get into a wonderful panel today. Again, aligning and integrating this work into district strategic and school improvement plans is imperative.

It needs to be codified, if you will, memorialized somewhere in short, mid, long range plans for it to have viability if you will, get buy-in attraction. As Bryan alluded to, paying attention to the nexus width and the implications of related federal district and school-wide policies, particularly attendance policies, especially student discipline policies, IDEA, civil rights, FERPA, HIPAA, and the like. We must kind of be very, very mindful and beyond compliance because those things are in place for a reason. And particular questions are, are there areas of disconnect, particularly let's say between all the wonderful work you're doing around student support teams, PBIS, MTSS, and your student discipline policies or code of conducts as they currently exist? Are there areas for better alignment integration? I could give many examples of work we've done in other spaces where all this wonderful work is going on and student discipline policies and codes of conduct are super explicit with shall and will happen around the consequences.

And if particular social, emotional, mental health behavioral reports are mentioned, it is they may happen or they're like blips on the screen and the likes. So it really help our colleagues and our policy makers be equally as intentional, right, about these upstream preventions interventions that supports it as we too often are around student consequences. Right. And be ever mindful of the importance of garnering district and site level buy-in and support by formally and consistently sharing and celebrating quick wins and successes, small and big, and evidencing the return on investment over time. As we were preparing for this call, our friends in Memphis mentioned that one of the tough parts is what we're doing and if we're successful, it is to prevent something. And if you are successful, it never happened. So how do you evidence that? And this is particularly probably a tricky equation right now, where our students, some of our students are struggling a bit more than they were three years ago in social, emotional, mental health behavior realm.

And likewise again for all of us, and that means education professionals as well. So we really have to be data grounded and really make sure that folks know when it's working and celebrating those minor successes, those moderate level successes, and over time those large scale, more tangible successes to make sure that we maintain traction and buy-in around this work. And again, thank you very much, and as we think about where you and your district currently are, keep some of those things in mind and come to the question and answer with curiosities relative to where you are in this wonderful journey. Cindy.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Dr. Mayo, thank you for those great opening words. I really appreciate that you started with the detail in school up into the school wide, up into the district wide, and then reminding us about those overall arching goals and also the celebration of success. It's so important. We appreciate your words. And now it's my great pleasure to welcome into our room our panelists. We have Ms. Donna Goings and Ms. Michelle Robinson-Jones from Memphis Shelby School Districts in Tennessee. We have Mr. Larry Porter and Mr. Matthew Wicks from Pasco County School District in Florida, and Ms. Joyce West and Ms. Amber Casavant from Gardner Public Schools in Massachusetts. So welcome on to the call everybody. I already see an icon flying up the side for you, so thank you so much for keeping those coming. As we launch into our panel conversation and you digest what Dr. Mayo just shared, please don't forget, use that Q&A button to ask your questions.

Now I'd like to launch our panel off with our first question. And just as Dr. Mayo had mentioned, we start at the beginning. So I'd like us to begin our time together with a brief introduction of your district and a little bit about your district and when and why you began to really implement the strategies using PBIS and other positive approaches and into your student support teams to change disciplinary practices and to add those additional supports. And I'd like to begin with our folks from Memphis, Shelby, and Ms. Donna like to begin our conversation. That'd be wonderful.

Donna Goings: Hi everyone. I'm Donna Goings. I am the director of Memphis Shelby County School's Mental Health and Family Wellness Centers. We're under the Department of Student Equity, Enrollment & Discipline. It is my absolute pleasure to be here with you today to share and give some insight on our mental health center and the supports that we offer our students and families, and how we integrate with our awesome student support teams that are throughout all our schools in Memphis, Shelby County schools. So since I've been with the district, we've always utilized some PBIS, RTI and SST models, and so I'm happy to say that our district definitely focuses on providing those supports to help keep students in school, identify those social, emotional and academic needs of those students. So again, I'm happy to be here. I am ecstatic about sharing our awesome school-based mental health and family wellness center programs that we have.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so much. I'd like to shift over to you, Larry. If you want to tell us a little bit about your district and the when and the why you began.

Larry Porter: Absolutely. Hello everybody. My name is Larry Porter and I'm from Pasco County Schools, and that's in Florida, just a little bit North of Tampa. We have about 86,000 students across 100 schools in our district and it's quite diverse, we have everything from very up and coming affluent areas that have lots of growth, exploding growth, and then we have areas that are very rural with folks who have lived there in generations. And then we have some areas that have poverty and are very transient. And so we looked at lots of different efforts in terms of supporting all of our students, and we've realized that there are things that we can do intentionally to support all of our students, but some of them

might need different types of supports. And so thinking strategically about what schools and which students have different types of needs was part of our efforts in expanding and to understanding how positive behavior support can impact student outcomes.

We also just have an uptick in behavior needs. Particularly since the pandemic, we have found just a growing need and we value and we believe it's part of our theory of action that, engaging students with where they are in terms of behavior is a pathway to them being successful in our system and then also in our community afterwards. And so we have found just a compelling why in terms of supporting our students through the needs that our students are showing us, but then also in just why we exist as an organization. And that's to ensure that students are successful for themselves, but also for our communities.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you so much for those comments, Larry. And we're going to go ahead and move over to you, Joyce, if you could tell us a little bit about your district?

Joyce West: Sure. Amber and I are from Gardner Public Schools, we are located in Central Massachusetts. We have about 2,500 students in our district, only four schools, so a much smaller school district. We are 70% high needs population, and we have some diversity, we probably have maybe about 60% white students, 28% Hispanic, Latino, and then a variety of other ethnicities and races. But initially, we started PBIS in 2014 with our elementary and middle school buildings. And actually, it was through their participation at the time our Department of Education had a PBIS Academy, so they attended that and we started implementation.

But by 2019, we saw a dramatic increase in office discipline referrals. Honestly, central office couldn't even go into buildings and sit down and meet with administrators or sit in meetings without staff being called away on the walkie-talkies because they had to handle student behaviors. And so this really prompted district leadership to really examine what was happening in our district. And so we looked at having a needs assessment conducted for each of our buildings to figure out where we were at with PBIS. And really results indicated that, a lot of the staff in our buildings themselves, were just working in silos, and there really was no sustaining student impact or fidelity to the current system that we had in place. And so really what we were hoping to shift, and our big why is, we really wanted to shift this culture from the individuals putting out fires in buildings to really building a sustainable preventative system of response.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. You went right up to that level that Rob ended his contact setting up at that systems level and making sure that things are aligning in the schools and among the systems level folks as well. Thank you so much for those overviews. I'd like to talk a little bit now about the concept of shifting practice, which can be an arduous process for practitioners, especially when they're in the everyday work of working with students in classrooms and in other settings in the school, and they're trying to learn these new skills and implement things differently and

better for students. Can you please describe for me how you work with your school personnel to get buy-in and move this work forward? Larry, I'd like to start with you on this one.

Larry Porter: Absolutely. I would say it's an ongoing process, it's something that just is never finished, because as soon as you think you have it, you don't anymore. And there's turnover at schools, again, with just the number of schools that we have, there's such turnover, and so every new person in a position represents an opportunity really to restart that buy-in conversation, particularly with our leaders when they shift, and then also with our staff within the buildings. So it is consistency and having the conversations early and often with folks relative to like, "This is our values related to supporting students.' And so we had a conversation about a year ago in our district in terms of, "What do we value when it comes to student behavior and wellbeing in our schools? What will we commit to collectively as a district?" And it was an interesting conversation, we had different stakeholders contribute to that and say, "If we really believe that students can and will learn at high levels, what does that mean for us? And what would it look like in terms of our values if we truly believe that?"

And so we had administrators have input, we had our community, we had our district leadership, we had teachers all collectively just put together some collective statements that we were able to commit to. And so now it's a matter of making good on that commitment, that collective commitment, and saying, "If we truly value this, that means our behaviors and our actions will shift to align with those collective commitments." But we started it from, again, consistency and then also trying to pull together all the stakeholders to get folks together on the same page in terms of what we are after and what we're committed to.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Right. So taking those multiple stakeholders, creating joint values, gathering the commitment statements, and then working to align your behaviors to those values. Excellent. Thank you so much for that. Joyce, would you like to join that conversation?

Joyce West: Absolutely. I had a similar tactic to Larry's district. I can't stress enough the importance of leadership buy-in here. Our leadership, we really wanted to create a school district, not a district of schools, and so that was really important for us. And so we created a district team, and that district team really was comprised of different roles and responsibilities from each building, and so there was representation not just from administration, but from mental health staff, different roles and responsibilities there. But really what we wanted to create was a framework, this common vision, this common philosophy that we knew no matter which building we were in, no matter who we were speaking to, they would understand that and really forcing this idea through a teaming structure. So we created different teams within our buildings, and in that team itself, we built capacity understanding.

We did a lot of our training. And in these building teams, we've also focused on working with individuals within those teams to build their capacity. We worked

with facilitators, we worked with administrators, and so we focused on many different levels really to build the culture in the buildings. And I think through that too, not only a system of teaming, but we've really focused on routines and habits, again, to build a culture, we have to have a common way of doing things. So it wasn't just the relationships and the teaming, but it was also the scripts and the tools that surrounded that as well.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you so much for that, Joyce. And Donna, would you like to jump in? And you're from a slightly different perspective being in the wellness centers and then rolling out the messages with the rest of the folks at the schools. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Donna Goings: Okay. For us as the Mental Health Center, we are school-based, which helps a lot with integrating in the school. We are also under Student Equity, Enrollment and Discipline, which that speaks a lot for itself right there. We work with the school counselors, the professional school counselors, the attendance people, so when you talk about the team effort, we're all under the same umbrella, so we get to collaborate a lot. So a lot of our initiatives are discussed and pretty much agreed upon. Our district very much supports the student support team model. All our schools really follow that, our counselors lead that.

Larry, I think mentioned earlier about some of the challenges, which are when you lose staff, especially our counselors who are gatekeepers, if we have schools that are not staffed, and that's where you would have some of maybe the gaps in that model per se. But the work doesn't stop because we have the other team members who picks it up and keeps it going. So for us, the multidisciplinary team approach works well. We know it's work, we're mental health, we treat the whole child.

We are fortunate in that we are at the table, but we're also licensed mental health professionals, so those Tier 2s and Tier 3s, we're at the table where we're discussing what the child may need, but then we have the parent there as well. So we have them immediately to explain what our role is, and then we can get them if the child is being referred to us, which normally when we're at the meeting, if there's something going on, that's on your Tier 2 or Tier 3 realm, and then we get buy-in, we can meet with the parent. And that makes the delivery of our services so much easier in that multidisciplinary approach, that team approach.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely. And you're pulling in that caregiver, that family immediately as well.

Donna Goings: Immediately.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Which falls in right into that buy-in, right?

Donna Goings: Right. Exactly.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent.

Donna Goings:	And then it eliminates, again... That's part of some of the issues that we have sometimes is reaching parents. We are urban school district, we are 110,000 or more students with about 160 to 200 schools, so we're huge and we're inner city. Sometimes it's difficult to reach parents a lot of times to get those consents that we so need, so the S team process is so crucial and vital for us to deliver services when we can get that parent right there.
Cindy Carraway-Wilson:	Absolutely. And for our audience, I want to remind everybody that one of the fact sheets specifically focused on ways to engage families and caregivers, so please do check out that fact sheet as well. Now, I'd like to shift our focus a bit. We heard from Rob, and we know from the fact sheets that were released in May, that there were several strategies that were specific to different focus areas. This one of course, is around student and teacher support teams and how we can use these teams to create inclusive, supportive and safe learning environments for every student, and also to avoid those exclusionary discipline practices.
	And the three areas that we're focusing in on as strategies are creating those student support teams, identifying the students who need those additional supports and those Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports that are offered by all of you to students. So please, if we can begin by describing how you created your student support teams in about a minute or so, if possible, how did you go about selecting the teams? If you weren't involved in that process, how are teams maybe selected as you are meeting the Tier 2 and three levels? And I'd like to begin this with, Joyce.
Joyce West:	Yeah, sure. We do have a district model, and in that model, we're really deliberate with who needs to attend our SSTs. We've clearly identified that they're non-negotiable members, so all teams must have school psychologist, BCBA, school counselor, PBIS coach, administrator, and certainly depending on what we're discussing, if it's Tier 3, we definitely need the teacher. Sometimes, depending on Tier 1, Tier 2, it's going to be more flexible. So our focus too with that is creating sustainable meetings, so we have sacred times. So with that, nothing else happens during MTSS block, so there shouldn't be IEP meetings scheduled, principal meetings scheduled, people need to be there. That's a non-negotiable. It's important. And we convey that message.
	We have a clearly identified facilitator for our SST meetings, and the facilitators in every building also meet collectively at a district level. That's another way, again, that we coordinate our resources and efforts to build a robust system. We organize our SST teams to have common tools, common scripts, and so those are non-negotiables. We also organized our building teams, our SST teams have common data sources and data points. And they need to meet a certain threshold, because that way we can compare even at a district level how well we're doing. So by having a commonality to those things, we can move the work more effectively. There's so much I could say about it.
Cindy Carraway-Wilson:	Yes. There's a lot going on in all of your districts, all right, absolutely.

Joyce West: It's hard keeping it to a minute.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you so much for those pointers. Those are really important ones. Donna, would you like to join in?

Donna Goings: Pretty much we have the same process, except that our counselors are those ones that are trained. They have forms that must be completed as well, so we pretty much have on our teams, the counselors, of course, teachers, behavior specialists, school psychologists, school social worker, and parents, administrators. Now, the key players are invited based on the data that the counselor has gathered about that student. So depending on what's going on with the student, we'll pretty much dictate who will be invited to those meetings, because we only want the key players that can contribute pertinent information and also offer support. So sometimes we may need our PT or OT people. But pretty much we look at the counselor is the gatekeeper, there is documentation that must be completed, there's minutes. Consistency is the key, having those dedicated times where we know that, "Okay, this is when we have our S teams." Some of the challenges there is, sometimes maybe if the social worker or the school psychologist is not assigned to that school, then we work around that to ensure that we have those key players when needed.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so very much. And Larry, do you have other things that you're doing at Pasco?

Larry Porter: Absolutely. And so I think having consistency across the districts, at least our district in terms of the makeup of those teams. In Pasco, we have three types of teams that we want every school to implement. We want every school to have a leadership team, a collaborative teacher team or a collection of collaborative teacher teams, and then a school intervention team. And those three teams collectively make up the teams that work to support all students. They all take a different perspective or slice of the triangle, so to speak, in terms of what avenues of multi-tiered systems of support they work on. But building some consistency across our schools was really, really important.

We had schools doing all sorts of things, and they were all stepping on everybody's toes. And so we didn't have common language in terms of what those teams were and what they were up to. And so a big step for us was to build some commonality, which I heard some of the other folks comment about. And so that was a big step for us. And then bringing some consistency to the makeup, so definitely having leadership involved, they're critical. Having general education teachers, special education teachers, student support staff, psychologists, counselors, social workers, and other key stakeholders involved. And then bringing some consistency to that across the buildings was really, really essential.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: I'm definitely hearing that term consistency coming up a lot, and that is key. And I imagine that if you have any student movement among schools, that that would also help that issue, if you have students switching schools at any point during their tenure at your districts. So that's wonderful to hear. The strategies

to support student social, emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing and success, oftentimes begin with that Tier 1 supports, those universal approaches or universal screenings that you might use to identify students later on who might need additional support. If you can take a minute or so, or a couple of minutes maybe to talk a little bit about how your student support teams work, maybe with others within the school to provide those Tier 1 supports? And with this one, I'd like to begin with Michelle.

Michelle Robinson-Jones: Hi, everyone. Yes. Well, of course our Director, Ms. Goings has already discussed that we use a multi-tiered system of support at Memphis-Shelby County Schools and within our mental health center as well. And we try of course, to focus on the least restrictive, least intensive and least intrusive solution when addressing these issues with our students. With our Tier 1 supports, we definitely want to make sure that we're interfacing with our administrators, our school counselors and educators to identify the needs of the student population and to learn the culture of the school and needs of students and parents. We ensure that all students are aware of their supportive staff by providing student orientations, teacher orientations, and encourage clinicians to participate in parent teacher type meetings and other school-wide events throughout the year.

We provide grade level presentations to address issues such as bullying prevention, signs of suicide, presentations to all fifth, seventh, and ninth graders. We also address our alcohol and drug related issues, providing opioid prevention presentations to our high schoolers and conflict resolution. So it really just depends on what's going on within that school environment. And we just make sure that we are interfacing on a daily basis with our school administrators and our school counselors, so that we just know what is needed in that school environment.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: I appreciate that you have some consistencies of things that you're offering across schools, but you're taking into consideration that each school has its own culture, its own norming going on, and so you want to fit in with that. Thank you so much for those comments. Larry, we're going to come back up to you for this question.

Larry Porter: Absolutely. This has been the year of Tier 1 support for Pasco County. And what I mean by that is we... And going back to what Dr. Mayo said about sometimes we have lots of consistency for punishment when it comes to behavior, but not so much in terms of preventative strategies. And so we challenge ourselves to say like, "For every student, can we guarantee that they get taught the expectations in their schools in terms of behavior, resiliency and wellbeing?" And when we did the self-analysis, we found that we just didn't have the coverage to guarantee that for each and every student. So we brought some consistency to it, we identified curricula that we wanted to use for every school, for every grade level, and we made that decision that that would happen.

We created modules when we couldn't find the curricula, and that's where Matt, who also is from Pasco County, him and his team, they worked on creating some of those modules for our secondary students because we have

some required instruction. And part of that required instruction now for secondary is wellbeing, we need health, physical wellbeing, and then also mental health wellbeing and to build resiliency in our students. So lots of Tier 1 efforts in terms of teaching, making sure that every student has access to quality Tier 1 instruction related to that wellbeing was really essential for us this year.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. It's great to hear that it's Tier 1 year. That's wonderful. Those Tier 1 supports are so important. Now I'd like to invite Amber to join us. It's another new voice.

Amber Casavant: Hi. So our Tier...

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Good morning.

Amber Casavant: Hi. So our tier three student support teams and really all of our tiered MTSS teams utilize an interconnected systems framework. So this brings together our PBIS and our mental health supports into really one single system of delivery, breaking down silos of service delivery across different areas. So the interconnected systems, which we refer to as MTSS, it really helps enable us to have multidisciplinary teams as well as multidisciplinary intervention plans for students.

So our tier three student support teams also utilize an entrance criteria checklist that really focuses heavily on ensuring that tier one universal supports and practices are in place at the student's classroom level. We want to make sure individualized student supports are layered on top of tier one universal and tier two targeted supports, not in place of those supports. Some of these supports at tier one include our school-wide PBIS, some high-leverage class and practices to increase engagement, as well as tier one SEL lessons delivered in the gen ed classroom as well.

We also utilize several screeners. One of the screeners, actually, that we use is the BESS screener for those. Not familiar with that. It's the Behavioral and Emotional Screening System. And we use this screener to identify students at risk as well as we've created data decision-making criteria to flag students using the screener who may need more intensive, individualized tier three supports as well as those at risk. All of our MTSS teams, I know Joyce had mentioned earlier, and some others have mentioned as well.

But we have core membership of content expertise on these teams, and they're core members, so they're on our tier one, our tier two, and our tier three teams. And this really helps to ensure alignment across tiers and bring back that connection to tier one. This is extremely important when we begin fading or graduating students from tier three level of support back to tier two and back to tier one. Otherwise, students would get stuck at tier three if there was not a continuum of supports in place.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so much. That had really resonated with me when I was first speaking with you about the idea of the importance of kind of rolling back the intensive supports so that students can thrive in that universal support system. Wonderful. The second strategy in the fact sheets is really focused in on identifying those students who do need those additional tier two and tier three supports.

And we know that student support teams engage in a variety of actions to do this. So if you could take a moment to just describe how your student support teams identify and engage those students who are in need of those additional supports and, if you engage their families at all, how you engage their families. And Larry, I'd like to begin with you again today on this one.

Larry Porter: Absolutely. We do data referrals. We look at our data, and we ask folks to look at it at certain times of the year. And we give them a... We give our schools a cadence in which they should start to look at... We give them a timeline in terms of when some of those universal screeners would naturally occur throughout the year. And then, we give them a data protocol to use in order to identify students who might be at risk for either academic or behavioral needs. And as soon as we know, we prompt schools to intervene. Not to wait to intervene right away. And making sure that schools act on those screeners is really critical. So giving them some protocols in order to do so. But then also making sense of that data.

When you get that data, how do you process it? What are those cutoffs? What are the... When do students demonstrate need? What does your warning system or your early warning system? So building in some of the data sets that we have, either academic or behavior, to do so. And then we need to work on our family commitment... communication. That's something that we could do a little bit better. Once we start providing supports, we do a pretty good job of communicating, and we've made some really nice upgrades. But right away, that would be something that we could get better at as a system. It happens at individual schools in a really nice way, but building some of those practices across the system would definitely be an upgrade for us.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. So you see that as a space for growth for Pasco. Excellent. That's wonderful. Thank you so much for that overview and that description of how you engage students and your hopes for engaging families in the future. Amber, I'd like to come over to you for your response to this question.

Amber Casavant: Sure. So to identify students who need additional supports, in Gardner, we have district-wide database decision-making criteria. So in addition to our universal screener, I mentioned earlier, we also consider data point thresholds from a number of other data sources, such as our office discipline referrals, attendance data. We're beginning to also use unplanned nurses and counselor visits as well as restraint and timeout data.

So when a student is identified through one of these or more of these data sources, we engage families by reaching out via notification letters initially to let

them know early that their child has been identified for needing some additional support. And that would be reaching back out with some more details around interventions. Then, once interventions, the team identifies which interventions are going to be selected for that student. Then another letter goes home indicating more detailed information around that. And we have a consistent MTSS point person for families to reach out to throughout this process to answer any questions or concerns or really discuss their child's process going through the MTSS system.

And that's a point person we have at each building so that we know they'll be getting the information that they need. At the tier three level, if an individualized support plan is being developed, we also have an additional parent input form really to gain additional parent input regarding goals, strengths, preferences for the student that can be incorporated in creating that student's individualized, whether behavior or intervention support plan. Some parents do attend actual individual student-level meetings at tier three, and some students have clinic meetings when the student has multiple outside providers. In regards to engaging students, this is an area, I would say, that we're continuously improving on.

At the middle and the high school level, some of our tier-two level interventions are more student-driven with focus on problem-solving skills, and then those problem areas are actually identified and really driven by the student. At the elementary level, some next steps identified to improve kind of getting students engaged in their process have included getting student feedback upon exit of intervention. So more of like a simple survey. How did they feel? How did they feel this impacted their behavior or attendance or whatever the area of need might have been? And then, at a tier three level preference assessments are utilized, and planning individual support plans. But this overall would definitely be an area that we're looking at continued improvement for as well.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. I think many districts and schools and individuals are always looking to improve that young person engagement piece. So thank you so much for your thoughts and, again, that visionary idea of a place for growth. And Michelle, we're going to bring your voice back into our space. How would you like to respond to this?

Michelle Robinson-Jones: Yes, definitely from a mental health center perspective because that's where we're coming from here. But we definitely encourage our clinicians to be involved in the SST meetings as well as the RTIB meetings where we'll have that behavior specialist, the professional school counselor, our school social worker, and others who are involved in discussing the data regarding the student's attendance and discipline. And then, of course, we will receive referrals so that we can provide those tier two interventions. So those interventions sometimes require the clinician to provide the FBA BIP.

Other times, we're dealing... we're the ones dealing with the grief support group, the peer-parental conflicts, bullying issues, self-esteem-related issues. And then, of course, it can become more intensive when we're dealing with

students who might be dealing with depression or anxiety or other mental health disorders. But we definitely use our evidence-based interventions. We have several that we use. I'm not sure if you all are familiar with WhyTry or Positive Action, or I'm sure you've heard of cognitive behavioral interventions for trauma in schools. So we use all of the evidence-based modalities to address these issues.

Donna Goings: And I also wanted say...

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Mm-hmm.

Donna Goings: I'm sorry.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That's okay.

Donna Goings: Our counselors usually send out a need survey as well, and which will identify those students. Also, there may be students who we used to use the system, but we're using a new one now where we were able to go in and look at attendance issues, discipline issues across the district and across the schools. And those kids were pulled, which we still do that now, and that's how students are also identified.

We also have a system in PowerSchool, which is our database for students information where they have their addresses, their personal information, as well as their school information. So parents can also make referrals through there. So we really have a comprehensive program, and we do work collaboratively. And absolutely, those S teams are very integral in providing our students with the services that are needed.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yeah, absolutely. That's great to hear that you have a variety of approaches to respond to the need, but also that really clear methodology of making sure you're meeting the needs that you're being faced with. For sure. So I'm going to actually move us forward to question... to our seventh question. Just because of timing, we might revisit the other one that we're missing.

So I want to move us into the third strategy on the fact sheet. That is the effective implementation of those two to tier three. Can you please describe any additional data... ways that you use data to guide your intervention choices and to support plans and holding to the fidelity of those plans? Anything that might be different than what you've already mentioned? And for this one, I'd like to begin with Michelle.

Michelle Robinson-Jones: All right. So we have identified a criteria that assist school personnel and identifying students who have intensive needs, such as those who present with symptoms of mental health disorders. Again, I mentioned earlier depressive symptoms and anxiety symptoms or recent losses of loved ones. We also have students who may be feeling suicidal or homicidal. And then, of course, we have students who have been admitted for inpatient services. And so anytime we have a student that is returning to school, we definitely like to make sure that

we're reintegrating them into the school environment and making sure that we have support systems in place to address their needs.

So the clinician, along with the professional school counselor, sometimes teachers need to be aware of certain situations, so we make sure that they're aware. And, of course, if it's to the point where we need to move on to providing those tier-three level interventions, we're going to complete a thorough assessment so that we can provide the proper treatment plan to address that student's needs. And, of course, with tier-three level services, we're not only providing services to the student, we also offer services to the family as well. So I hope I'm on point with that.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That's excellent. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Yes, we're on. And I did misnumber that, so I apologize, Michelle. We're on this. We're on six. So you did perfectly with that. And I love the idea that you had that focus on the parent or the family wellness as well within your center. So it's student-focused, but it's recognizing that the student doesn't live in a vacuum, that they're surrounded by caregivers and family members who are providing additional supports. For sure.

I'd like to go ahead and move over to Larry for that question. I'm going to restate the question just to make sure that we have it. So it's the third strategy. It's focusing in on the effective interventions for tier two and tier three supports, including those uses of data and evidence to guide the choices for intervention and holding to that fidelity. Larry?

Larry Porter: Yeah, we work on that at a couple levels. So we've worked with those school-level teams that I talked about earlier to build some common decision-making relative to looking... using a common process, a problem-solving process where they identify an area to improve, they develop hypotheses for why a student isn't necessarily demonstrating that improvement yet, come up with some strategies to support that student and then monitor their progress. And so we want every school team, when they're working at tier two or tier three, to go through that process to support students.

And so that's the process side. On the other side, we've tried to really build the toolbox for schools for all sorts of interventions that we've been able to provide training on materials and support. So we've identified some at the district level that we think every school would benefit in terms of having. We've vetted them, and then we want every school to have access to those, so when they need them, they can use them. So we've tried to work on it through those two lenses.

The other thing that we've really worked on is to build our documentation into our student information system so that it doesn't exist outside of some of the other things that we capture with students as well. I mean, that's done a really nice job in terms of communicating with parents because it's all in one spot. Attendance, grades, all of it is in one place now, including our supports for students. And that has done a really... that's been really helpful in involving parents so they know what's happening for kids.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so much. We'll move over to you, Amber. The same question.

Amber Casavant: Sure. So our tier two and our tier three MTSS teams, we progress monitor based on student outcome data at the individual student level at the intervention level, and also at a school-wide overall tier level for both status, kind of like current status and trends. We progress monitor individual students making progress, not making progress, and we base this on their entrance criteria and data points upon entering tier two or entering tier three.

Our mental health staff also progress monitor effectiveness of tier two and tier three interventions. So they are looking at identifying more percentage of students receiving... that are receiving the intervention that are making progress or not making progress or staying the same. Our systems team review monthly and annually at the tier level, and this is when they're really looking at kind of how many students have entered tier two or entered tier three.

Out of the students receiving supports, how many are making progress, not making progress? And this is where we kind of look at the percentage of students that are also might be ready to fade supports or graduate. And this really helps us to get a bigger picture of our tier two and tier three effectiveness at that school level. We do this because when we first started, we often found that a student might be making progress in an intervention based on pre-post test or maybe the number of points that they've earned and check and checkout. But it wouldn't necessarily be impacting the student's outcome data based on their entrance criteria.

So it may not be reducing their office discipline referrals, or it may not be improving their attendance or whatever the data source that they were originally flagged for. So that's why we kind of look at it at a few different levels. For individual student progress, we always refer back to those entry points and student outcome data sources. And we look at the intervention level primarily because nobody has any extra time, and we want to make sure that we're being efficient with staff's time.

And if we have interventions that are not showing effectiveness and a large percentage of students are not making progress in that intervention, that would be an intervention we would consider either discontinuing or looking for other gaps... other supports around that. This process also includes checking fidelity of interventions and individual student support plans when a student's not making progress. So basically, we don't want to layer on more intensive supports or change, recreate the wheel if the interventions or plans that are in place are not being implemented in the way that they were intended.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Mm-hmm. Excellent. So you combine that fidelity with the data being... informing the interventions themselves with the implementation, which is a wonderful combination. Now, I'd like to shift gears just a bit. We're also going to welcome another new voice into the space. Matthew's going to be joining us and leading us off on this question. I'd like each of you to briefly, in about one

	minute, give us an example of a success story, something that demonstrates the impact that a student support team can have on a student's trajectory. Matthew.
Matthew Wicks:	So, in Pasco County Schools, probably not new to anyone else or exclusive to anybody else, we do turnaround student of the year for each one of our schools. And just success stories are hard in a minute, but I'll do my best. The bragging part, right. But I think, for us, we had a student at one of our middle schools that was identified in sixth grade who was disengaged, was not interacting well with their peers, but yet they worked with that student throughout their three years of middle school. Had a 1.3 GPA, just not disruptive referrals, things like that.
	And then, by the time that student was in eighth grade, they had a 3.5 GPA. They were engaged with their teachers. Their teachers made lots of comments about that student wanted to now sit in the front of the classroom and just being basically a model student. I mean, and that's... think that is what... we're in the kid business, so I think that is what it's all about is even if it's one student, but each school celebrating that one student. And then we bring all those students together at the end of the year, and we have a banquet for them and celebrate all those students together and those schools for the hard work that they did with that student.
Cindy Carraway-Wilson:	Excellent. You just gave me chills because that is what implementation is all about, right. It's those impacts. And what a significant GPA change. And I can imagine what must've also been happening on the peer and teacher relationship level as well. It must've been pretty amazing to watch. Thank you so much for that story. Amber, we're going to come over to you for this one.
Amber Casavant:	So our success story that I wanted to share is more of a success story about a group of students. So this past school year, at the '22/'23 school year, we participated in a research project specific to our tier three systems with the May Institute to enhance our tier-three systems data and practices. And out of the 38 students that were eligible, so receiving tier three, we had a focus group of about 11 students that were receiving tier-three level supports and interventions.
	And with this focus group, we were able to focus on enhancing our data analysis, fidelity of existing behavior support plans, conducting FBAs and implementing new behavior support plans, as well as providing increased performance feedback, and the outcomes and success for the 11 students in the focus group really indicated almost a 50% decrease in reduction in office discipline referrals for those students.
	And 91% of the students in the focus group made progress as compared to their entrance criteria, which really equated to a time savings of almost like 11 instructional days for students and five saved days for administrators, which we could all use some extra time. At a systems level, our tier three fidelity of implementation assessment score increased from 68% up to over 90%. And our staff perception assessments also showed improvement as well. And you can

find this research that was recently published on PBIS.org, and I know Cindy has a link to it as well.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yes, that link will be coming into your chat boxes in just a moment so that if you'd like, you can check out that research. And I like that you emphasize the student changes, which are, again, there are huge shifts that happened and you also though emphasize that idea of time. And one of the things that we often hear is how hard it is to implement new things because there's so much happening already and there's not enough time, but this is an example of how the implementation but with fidelity can actually save some time and be able to allow for even deeper relationships and deeper focus on academics as well. Thank you. And now we're going to come over to Donna for your success story.

Donna Goings: Okay. So we have many success stories, but for sake of time, I'll only share one. We have a student who was not attending school regularly. When they were in school they were tired, not engaged, and so the teacher brought this to this attention of the school counselor. We tried to reach out to the parent, we scheduled the ST meeting.

In that ST meeting, it was determined that they were homeless and living in their car, so which made it difficult sometimes for the child to come to school because bathing and all of those things that we know they do not have. So our awesome district, which we have a special populations program, we connected them with that department. We also provided mom support. We got them clothing and housing.

And so the student of course with all of their basic needs met was able to attend school, focus and was able to finish the year and actually pass their classes. So we have many stories like that. I'm just so thankful and grateful that we have programs like this all across the nation really to address these needs because the needs are great. The needs are huge.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: They are huge.

Donna Goings: ... all these efforts.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I agree with you. The needs are huge, but what you also shared is that the potential is equally huge, right? If we can meet the needs, then we can help students access that potential and that is key for the work that we're doing.

We're pushing time a little bit, so I'm going to pause us here to close out. We'll come back to the last couple of questions that we have, and we're also going to go into our live Q&A, so if you haven't already posted a question into the Q&A area of Zoom, please go ahead and do that.

So I know that we have a lot of stuff still to talk about in the Q&A, so stick around until 4:30 to hear those responses. In the meantime, we want to remind everybody that we know that there are lots of ideas and lots of interesting

things happening out there, so please feel free to visit the bestpracticesclearinghouse@ed.gov And share those ideas. And you can also gain resources there as well as at the NCSSLE website where you can get all kinds of resources on ways to improve climate and learning conditions for all students.

In addition, we have some upcoming webinars to talk to you about. October 25th we have a webinar coming up on promoting health and wellbeing of our LGBTQ+ students. That's next Wednesday. November 8th, we're focusing in on preventing and addressing online harassment. November 15th will be one of our human trafficking series webinars focusing on addressing child exploitation. That webinar series this year has been expanded to focus on human trafficking and child exploitation, those events that happen in kids' life that don't quite meet that trafficking definition.

And in December, we're offering one of our Free to Learn series webinars focusing in on creating welcoming environments, and we encourage you to keep your eyes out for all of those event announcements and to come in the attend and share your thoughts and ideas through the Q&A.

We also have a feedback form that we'd really appreciate you taking a few minutes to respond to. We take that feedback seriously and we use it to plan future content and to address your needs as they're coming up as hot topics. We also do share the summary of that form with all of our speakers and panelists so that they also can hear how this event was for you.

That link will be going into the chat and we will stay around for five minutes or so after our Q&A so that you can grab that link again. We'll bring the link up into chat for you at that time. Now I'd like to transition us back into our live Q&A, and I'm actually going to come back to our final question in the panels just to launch us off there because it is reflecting some of the themes that we're seeing in the Q&A, and this is a lessons learned one.

So if you knew when you were first beginning this process of working with student support teams and pulling in PBIS and all of your other positive strategies, if you knew then what you know now, how might your implementation of the work look different? Amber, would you like to start us off?

Amber Casavant: Sure. So some of the things that we changed or implemented along the way as we encounter different unintended consequences, I wouldn't necessarily change or do differently, but I might emphasize earlier in the process. I know we talked a little bit about in different questions how we started with a district team and having district support and representation across the district. I can't emphasize enough how important that was.

We created a district manual that was helpful in getting new teams started, and I think we ended up adding more and more district agreements and non-negotiables or criteria for teams to use, and I think, we added them as we went,

but if we had had more upfront, I think that would've been helpful. We also phased in implementation because you really can't do it all at once. So we phased in schools, we phased in tiers. We started with tier one at each school. I definitely don't recommend starting all tiers at once as they really need to build off of each other.

We found that the level of work needed benefited from stipended coaches. We started with volunteer coaches, then we went to stipended coaches, and then by the end we actually added building level administrators that really focused on MTSS systems data and practices for increased accountability and fidelity. So I think had we kind of started a little bit heavier earlier on, the work might've moved a little bit faster.

We had a huge focus on coaching and support to coaches and facilitators, and we added more and more supports to those coaches as we went, but from the gate we, throughout the process, but I would emphasize earlier focusing on facilitative and adaptive leadership with the coaches and the facilitators that are really leading your teams in addition to technical assistance.

And I think another big takeaway that I would emphasize earlier on is a focus on principal involvement and their buy-in earlier in the process. Towards the end and over the last year we have been like the leaders in the district, have a meeting with principals biweekly and really focusing with them on how MTSS is going in their building, what's going well, what are some areas they can help support.

All of our principals now have MTSS goals, but if we had kind of gotten them on board and really focused on their buy-in earlier, it might have moved that work a little bit faster because we found that at the end of the day, our schools that have principals with really strong buy in, the work has moved much faster than the schools that the principals, it took a little longer to come around.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Right. So making sure that buy-in is happening at all those levels is essential for sure. Yeah, yeah.

Amber Casavant: Yeah, absolutely.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Okay, great. Thank you so much for those strategies. And, Donna, would you like to talk a little bit about the question?

Donna Goings: Yes. So for us, since what we have I think is pretty good and it's working, I would just want to just improve what we have and tweak based on trends and what's going on in society. Somebody mentioned this earlier. Since Covid, we have seen an increase in mental health concerns for our students, and that's where maybe providing more screening tools to screen for that and also just trying to engage parents a little bit more than they are engaged. So pretty much I think that's all that we would do, but I think what we have is working and we're moving in the right direction.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Excellent. Thank you. I'm going to pull a couple questions from our audience now. There's a lot of themes showing up around young people with disabilities or in need of special education support. And a question here, coming from an audience member is, "Do you feel that the strategies that you've discussed, including the MTSS and the student support team strategies and others, do you feel like they're leading to identifying more young people with disabilities that might be served by the IDEA approach or any other approach to support those folks with disabilities?" Does anybody want to take a shot at that one and let us know if your student support team work is resulting in that?

Joyce West: Maybe I can jump in there and I'm speaking from what we see in our district in Gardner, but I don't think we see an increase. So the importance of having a robust systemic response that you're looking at fidelity as well as matching the intervention to the problem is key, and so if you notice an increase in identification, it is possible that there may be some areas within your system response that need to be strengthened.

That's one thing it's possible to look at. It is also if you have a high number, there might be themes in your building where you can begin to identify through that identification process if they have a common character or disability type. You also can focus on how can we prevent or get earlier prevention for, but students that really do have a disability or have been identified with a disability, even after all those things are happening, we know that they need consistent support as well, but it also sometimes takes them a lot longer to show some progress as compared to peers. So I don't know if that answered the question, but just some ideas.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you. Thank you so much. Does anybody want to add to that?

Larry Porter: We swung the other way in our county. When we implemented some of these practices they actually reduced, and then we had to look and make sure we were getting every student through child find. So it was finding that balance, but we didn't find that it increased. We found that it decreased actually initially, and now it's evened out a bit, at least in our county through the years of implementation, some of these systems.

Joyce West: We're not seeing an increase either, Larry, for the same reasons.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yeah. Excellent. Thank you. Thank you very much for that. Here's a question for Amber. I think she can give us some quick responses to it. There are some folks who are looking for some more information about MTSS for behavior.

Amber Casavant: Sure. So MTSS for behavior is really the PBIS framework. So PBIS and MTSS, they both utilize a multi-tiered system of support, and the PBIS framework focuses on behavior as well as other areas. But if you're looking for specific resources for that, I would recommend PBIS.org as well as PBISapps.org. There's a few other ones like PBIS Rewards and PBIS Worlds, but overall it would be kind of starting with the core elements of PBIS for behavior in a multi-tiered system of support.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent, thank you. Another question coming from the audience, and this can go to anyone who feels like you might want to respond is, "What role, if any, does the use of restorative practices play in your services at any tier through the student support work you're doing and the mental health work you're doing at your space, Donna?" Anybody want to speak to the use of restorative practices?

Amber Casavant: I can speak a little bit to how we, so we use school-wide information systems, which is SWIS, and that really tracks for us actions taken when an office disciplinary referral is entered and so we've done some trainings school-wide, some of our mental health staff have also done PD around restorative practices and restorative justice. And so we've focused on restorative conversations either between student and teacher or student to student and that's really where we've focused initially.

And so some of our response actions taken in our school-wide information system now include, instead of it just being conference with student, it might say restorative conversation, student-to-student, or restorative conversation student-to-teacher, or facilitated conversation with student and teacher. And so we've added in some of those practices right into our actions taken as responses to behavior in our behavior continuum.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you. Anybody want to add to that? Larry?

Larry Porter: I'll add real quick, just piggybacking off what Amber said, we've worked to add some of the restorative practices into our student code of conduct so that it's embedded. And again, going back to what Dr. Mayo said, sometimes the punishment is super coded in place, but not necessarily some of the restorative aspects of it. So it's a work in progress, but we have made some headways there. And so in terms of supporting students who need it relative to supporting students who are in that frame, it has been helpful.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so very much. We've got a lot of questions here. I'm just kind of scanning through to find ones that are representing themes. If your question isn't responded to in this timeframe, please do know that your questions will go out to both our speakers and also the Department of Ed that it might show up in another webinar in the future.

The next question I'd like to pull here will be this idea of students who sometimes fall through the crack, especially as they're transitioning from elementary to middle or middle to high school. What are some things that you do, some safety nets that you put in place to prevent students from falling into those cracks and from data not being shared among schools? Can anybody speak to that?

Joyce West: Amber can - I was going to say Amber certainly can too. We formalized a process of transition meetings and that we set up in our district calendar so that all teams across the district know when we're going to sit down and discuss those students that are receiving tiered supports in the school year and what it needs to look like when school resumes in the fall. And so not only we do that

within our building, but we do that cross buildings as well and I'm sure Amber can probably add more to that.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thanks. Donna? Mm-hmm.

Donna Goings: And for us, if there are students that we're meeting with, whether it be a tier two or tier three services, we encourage the parents to reach out to the counselors at the school. We also make referrals to the social worker that's at that school. So we definitely collaborate. We of course have to engage parents and get permission, but definitely supports are can we make that connection and not leave those kids just out there like that?

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Right. So you're ensure there's a soft handoff to the next provider.

Donna Goings: Exactly, yes.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely.

Donna Goings: And we even do one better. We make sure they meet with them, we meet with the new clinician, with the old ones so that transition is even-

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Wonderful.

Donna Goings: ... for that child.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Right. And that probably enhances that sense of safety and connection.

Donna Goings: It does. It does. Yeah, it does.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That's a great example. Thank you.

Donna Goings: Mm-hmm.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: We're almost at time, so I want to do a speed round here. We have three minutes, so a little less than a minute response for each of you. Okay? Actually about 30 seconds for each of you, if you all respond, what gives you hope in this work moving into the future? So what one thing kind of drives you, gives you hope?

Donna Goings: I'll go first.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Go ahead, Donna, please.

Donna Goings: So what gives me hope is that we are looking at students with problems, whether it be academic, emotional, social, emotional behavior. We're looking at them and saying what happened to you versus what's wrong with you? And providing supports to help them be successful in everything they're doing and also giving them that supportive learning environment to help them thrive.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely. Thank you so much for that. That shift, that trauma informed shift. Anyone else want to share? What gives you hope moving into the future? Matthew?

Matthew Wicks: So I'll share. So what gives me hope is the strategies that we've employed are working. We see it in students, we see the success. I think it's really about getting that collective buy-in and keeping that press on that collective buy-in and engagement between students, leaders, and families so we can get more kids success, so I think that's the hope.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you. Again, these hopeful messages are giving me goosebumps. What else do we have? Michelle?

Michelle Robinson-Jones: This is Michelle. I'll say that what gives me hope is the fact that I think as a society we all have become more aware and open to receiving support, mental health support, supports from school personnel, but just knowing that, especially since Covid, that more and more people are open to mental health services. I know that you can't get any better than that.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely. Absolutely. That's awesome, right? The drop of the stigma, but also the increase in help seeking willingness and skills. Yeah, absolutely. Anybody else want to chime in?

Joyce West: I'd just share that the creation of our MTSS framework and looking at these student support teams really created a collaborative learning community among our colleagues and in our district, outside of our district and it gives me hope to see that we view each other as a wonderful resource and someone that can help us move the work forward with students. And I think without that or without that mindset, we're kind of left to our own devices and kids are in such need right now. To know that we're all pulling together I think really that gives me hope.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Well, thank you so much. We are at time. We can end that on that collaboration and I'd encourage all of you in our audience to considering the things that you've heard today, but also consider the things that drive you. What is providing that hope as you're engaging students in whatever way you're doing that. Thank you all so much for being willing to join our webinar and share your expertise. We so appreciate your time and for our audience members, thank you for your attention and for being here and for all the work you're doing with students every day in our schools. I hope you have a wonderful rest of the day and we hope to see you on the next webinar. Take care.